

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 11, 2003

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 13, 2003

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 21, 2003

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2003–04 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1405

**Introduced by Assembly Members Wolk and Harman
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Laird)**

February 21, 2003

An act to add Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 5808) to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, relating to watersheds.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1405, as amended, Wolk. California Watershed Protection and Restoration Act.

Existing law provides for a watershed protection program, and provides funds to assist in implementing watershed plans to reduce flooding, control erosion, improve water quality, and improve aquatic and terrestrial species habitats, to restore natural systems of groundwater recharge, native vegetation, waterflows, and riparian zones, to restore the beneficial uses of waters of the state in watersheds, and to provide matching funds for federal grant programs.

This bill would enact the California Watershed Protection and Restoration Act. The act would state the policy of the state to endorse *voluntary* local, collaborative watershed partnerships as being in the state's interest in terms of effectiveness, citizen involvement, and community responsibility.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 5808) is added to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

CHAPTER 6.5. CALIFORNIA WATERSHED PROTECTION AND
RESTORATION ACT

5808. This chapter shall be known, and may be cited, as the California Watershed Protection and Restoration Act.

5808.1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(a) Efforts to conserve, maintain, restore, protect, enhance, and utilize California's rivers and streams for habitat, recreation, water supply, public health, economic development, and other purposes are most successful when governments, including federal and tribal governments, work in partnership with citizens in an effort to combine community resources, local initiative, and state agency support.

(b) The Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 2117 of the 1999–2000 Regular Session (Ch. 735, Stats. 2000) to require the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Resources Agency to evaluate how effective voluntary, community-based, collaborative watershed efforts or partnerships are in contributing to the protection and enhancement of California's natural resources, and what the state can do to assist them.

(c) The agencies produced a Report to the Legislature: Addressing the Need to Protect California's Watersheds-Working with Local Partnerships, April 2002.

(d) The recommendations of that report form the basis and factual support for the need for a statewide watershed policy that promotes local partnerships in watershed restoration, protection, and management.

(e) It is the intent of the Legislature that this act will bring more understanding to government agencies of the nature, scope, and complexity of working on a watershed basis at the local and regional level.

1 (f) The California Environmental Protection Agency and the
2 Resources Agency are encouraged to provide assistance and grants
3 under this chapter in a uniform and predictable manner to those
4 who choose to participate in the important work of watershed
5 restoration and enhancement pursuant to this chapter.

6 (g) The state hereby adopts a formal statewide watershed
7 policy to guide the acts of the state's agencies in promoting,
8 participating in, and implementing the restoration, protection, and
9 maintenance of the state's watersheds.

10 5808.2. (a) It is the policy of the state to endorse *voluntary*
11 local, collaborative watershed partnerships as being in the state's
12 interest in terms of effectiveness, citizen involvement, and
13 community responsibility.

14 (b) The state recognizes that reconfiguring state watershed
15 programs and organizations that use watershed management as an
16 organizing principle is a more efficient and effective delivery of
17 existing programs.

18 (c) The state recognizes that flexible guidelines for watershed
19 management are key to effective implementation. The state
20 recommends that local governments and special districts
21 participate in local watershed partnerships because the most
22 efficient and long-lasting watershed restoration and management
23 programs are those in which local government and special district
24 partnerships exist.

25 (d) The state recognizes and encourages technical assistance
26 from the state to watershed management partnerships through
27 technical training, advice and manuals describing acceptable
28 assessments, plans, and monitoring activities.

29 (e) The foregoing is the policy of the state for watershed
30 programs funded by general funds, bond funds, or combinations
31 of local, private, federal, or specific watershed funds of the various
32 state agencies and departments.

